

this point of order will be waived. They think they can quietly vote this way and no one will notice.

Well, when American voters finally notice that people here are saying one thing at home and doing another, are promising balancing budgets and promising that deficits do matter and then come up here and vote the opposite way—one day, the American electorate will wake up and vote these hypocrites out.

There are many other points of order that can be raised on this. The budget rules are actually of some value if we would actually obey the rules. Some of the people, you see them. You see them in their States, they are at campaign rallies, they will tell you at townhalls, they will tell you on the Senate floor that we absolutely must get spending under control. They will tell you that the debt is a problem. They will tell you that it is a terrible way to run government to have omnibuses. It is terrible to put \$6 trillion together in one bill, release it at 1:30 in the morning, and pass it; and you can read about it and find out what is in it later.

I suspect you will find a lot of promises, though, that will be violated as we vote on these PAYGO restrictions. Realize that this is the law. The law of the land says you can't do this. Congress, in passing this omnibus, is breaking the law. The statute says very clearly they cannot do this.

The only way they actually can evade responsibility is they change the law. They say: Oh, well, it would be embarrassing to get rid of the law; we will waive the law. So we have laws for decades that could actually right our fiscal house and put us on a course towards balancing our budget, and the rules are waived. They disobey their own rules.

Congress does a disservice to the economy every time it waives these points of orders. What good are these procedures if they are never upheld? What started as formal guardrails to keep fiscal health of this Nation strong is now merely just a messaging tool with no real significance that allows Senators to get away with making promises they never intended to keep.

That is why, in addition to raising this point of order, I am introducing an amendment to reform our budget procedures by raising the threshold. Let's make it less easy for them to break the rules. Currently, 60 Senators can break the rules. Let's make it two-thirds. Let's make it 67 Senators necessary to break the rules. Why? Because they are bankrupting this country, both sides of the aisle. There is an unholy alliance between both parties.

One party wants more welfare; one wants more warfare. It is either the military industrial complex or the welfare industrial complex. But what happens inevitably every year is spending goes up. People come and the journalists question: What will happen? What will happen with Christmas here?

The only thing that is known to happen is this body—both parties—will

continue to add to the debt. And there is a day—there is a day when you wake up and the dollar is worthless. Right now, the dollar is losing nearly 10 percent of its value on an annual basis, but there is a day when it is 10 percent a day or 10 percent an hour.

Great countries have succumbed to the destruction of currency, and it happens through debt, through deficit financing. And it is coming to us. There is a day of reckoning, unless we wake up and say: Enough is enough. We are going to do the prudent and rational thing: We are going to balance our budget.

It is time that we take our Nation's health seriously, and it is time that we show concern for those who are being damaged and devastated by inflation. The inflation at the grocery store, at the gas pump, who does it hurt the worst? It hurts those on fixed incomes, senior citizens. It hurts the working class and the poor. Those who have most of their expenditures that go towards consumption, towards their food and groceries and gas, people who spend 90 percent of what they earn on buying the stuff that allows them to live are the people that are decimated by inflation.

So if there are people in this body who do care, who do really care about those who are struggling with the burden of inflation, the best way is to quit digging the hole deeper, quit adding to the debt, and do what even European countries can do; and that is, begin to balance our budget.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

#### OMNIBUS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am pleased to announce that late last night, I introduced the bipartisan, bicameral, fiscal year 2023 omnibus appropriations bill. This bill invests \$772.5 billion in nondefense discretionary programs, including \$118.7 billion—a 22-percent increase—for VA medical care, and \$858 billion in defense funding. It provides \$44.9 billion in emergency assistance to Ukraine and our NATO allies and \$40.6 billion in emergency funding to assist communities across the country recovering from drought, hurricanes, flooding, wildfire, natural disasters, and other matters.

The pain of inflation is real, and it is being felt across the Federal Government and by American families right now. Our bill offers relief, certainty for the operations of the Federal Government through the fiscal year, and the resources necessary to secure the national defense. From funding for nutrition programs and housing assistance, to home energy costs and college affordability, this is a strong bill that directly invests in the American people. It is the product of bipartisan negotiations in line with the framework announced by Vice Chairman SHELBY, Chair DELAUNO, and myself last week,

and I strongly urge my colleagues to support it.

It fulfills the promise of bipartisan, landmark legislation that we passed this year, and it fulfills our promise to the American people.

If you voted for the PACT Act to care for our veterans, you should vote for this bill. If you voted for the CHIPS Act, you should vote for this bill. If you voted for the infrastructure law, you should vote for this bill. If you want to help families deal with the cost of heating, childcare, college, and housing, you should vote for this bill. If you actually want to fund the troops and their families at the levels of the NDAA, you should vote for this bill. If you want to help the victims of domestic violence, you should vote for this bill. If you want to support law enforcement, you should vote for this bill.

I will have more to say about our bill tomorrow, but our choice is clear. The alternative, a continuing resolution into the New Year, is short-sighted and wholly unnecessary. It imperils our national security, and it ignores the real pain and consequences of inflation. Without a clear path forward based on a bipartisan framework, punting on our responsibility to fund the Federal Government risks a full-year continuing resolution. Under a continuing resolution, America gets left behind. This is unacceptable.

We have a bipartisan bill. We have a path forward now. I look forward to continuing to work with my friend, Vice Chairman SHELBY, to pass this bill out of the Senate as soon as possible.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the joint explanatory statement accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

#### EXPLANATORY STATEMENT SUBMITTED BY MR. LEAHY, CHAIR OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS, REGARDING H.R. 2617, CONSOLIDATED APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2023

The following is an explanation of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023.

This Act includes the 12 regular appropriations bills for fiscal year 2023, supplemental appropriations providing for emergency assistance for the situation in Ukraine and for providing disaster relief, and other matter. The divisions contained in the Act are as follows:

- Division A—Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2023
- Division B—Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2023
- Division C—Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2023
- Division D—Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2023